

# Investing in cotton's greatest resource: people

**The cotton industry's labour force is critical to sustaining the industry's competitive advantage. Research invested in by the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) led to the development of the industry's first workforce development strategy.**

## ISSUE

The Australian agricultural sector as a whole is experiencing a labour and skills shortage, driven by an aging workforce, low attraction rates and strong competition from other sectors. This is being felt in the cotton industry, which is facing the challenge of attracting and retaining core staff and on-farm labour — both skilled and unskilled.

## SOLUTION

CRDC commissioned a research project into cotton's workforce development, which identified a number of key issues. It recommended the creation of an industry-led, regionally-based response to workforce development to address attraction, recruitment, development and retention of the industry's workforce.

## RESULTS

As a result, CRDC and peak cotton representative body Cotton Australia worked together to establish the Cotton Industry On-Farm Workforce Development Strategy in 2016. The strategy is focused on delivering workforce outcomes for growers on-farm, and will ultimately ensure that the industry is able to attract, retain and develop people. Implementation of the strategy will result in an adequate number of on-farm staff, with the necessary skills and experience to drive industry competitiveness.

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**“People are the Australian cotton industry's most important resource.”**

CRDC Executive Director,  
Bruce Finney

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## VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

New skills and changed practices deliver better jobs  
and boost regional capacity



Image credit: Ruth Redfern